



## **Housing Plan Implementation Committee**

Date: October 1, 2020

Time: 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM

Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

### **Minutes**

Present: Ben Bradlow, Karen Kelleher, Jenny Raitt, Michelle Shortsleeve, Patricia Worden, Erin Zwirko.

Guests: Alex Bagnall, Len Diggins, Wynelle Evans, Jennifer Susse, Jo Anne Preston.

The Committee first looked at the meeting summary from the September meeting. Patricia had previously provided edits to the meeting summary. Karen made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, and Patricia seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion, with Ben abstaining.

Turning to the next item on the agenda, Erin noted that the municipal affordable housing trust article was refiled for the special Town Meeting beginning on November 16. Erin had provided to the Committee the draft documents that were prepared in March 2020. Erin explained that the Select Board would likely hold a hearing on the article in late October to consider a recommendation to the special Town Meeting.

Erin explained that the newer members can review the minutes on the website to read about the discussions that happened in late 2019 and early 2020. She explained that a focus of the discussions at the time was the composition of the trust and the trust's activities that may require additional review by either the Select Board or Town Meeting. Although it was decided that neither entity would have to approve a conveyance, the draft requires approval by Town Meeting for borrowing.

Patricia asked if the Town Manager would recommend a positive motion to the Select Board, and whether the Select Board would recommend approval to Town Meeting. Jenny believed that both the Town Manager and that the Select Board would be supportive. Patricia recommended that the Arlington Housing Authority be listed in the agencies that would be consulted in the preparation of the trust's action plan.

Ben inquired why borrowing would require the additional oversight. Erin indicated that Town Meeting typically approves borrowing by the Town with a two-third majority. Ben

also offered that the list of trust members should include renters and public housing residents. Patricia indicated that this would be a good addition to the makeup of the trust members.

Karen thought that the Committee might need to think through the approval oversight related to borrowing more carefully. Patricia cautioned against pushing too far since a trust was previously defeated. Michelle agreed that this might need to be revisited, or select the Select Board which meets more often. Len made a suggestion to allow borrowing up to a certain amount, and a greater sum would require approval.

Michelle asked why adoption of a trust failed previously. Erin indicated that the reports from the Select Board and the Finance Committee had tied to the Community Preservation Act, which Arlington hadn't yet adopted. At this point in time, there may be more of an appetite for positive recommendations from both boards. Patricia noted that it is dangerous not having the support of the Finance Committee. Michelle indicated that she would like more information about borrowing. Erin indicated that she would look to communities with a Town Meeting structure and see if there is a trend one way or another on the topic. Jenny indicated that she would discuss the article with Sandy Pooler, Deputy Town Manager, who works closely with the Finance Committee to get a sense of the Finance Committee's interest.

Jo Anne Preston reiterated her support to direct short term rental revenue toward affordable housing. Erin indicated that the Town has received about \$700 in the last two years or so. Jo Anne noted that with a better process for registration and more enforcement of short term rentals, the revenue could increase. Karen noted that the Committee is supportive of tying this revenue stream to affordable housing, and Jenny noted that the revenue is meant to go toward affordable housing.

Turning back to an engagement opportunity on municipal affordable housing trusts, Karen noted that time is short. Erin explained that the Committee should schedule a meeting within the next week to revisit the borrowing question. The Committee set a meeting on October 8 at 8 AM. Karen proposed a virtual panel with experts from Massachusetts Housing Partnership and towns that have adopted trusts, and offered to begin reaching out. In order to schedule this before a potential Select Board hearing, the Committee decided to hold a form on October 14. Karen also recommended that each Committee member advocate within their networks, and ask if the Committee wanted to send a joint letter to the editor to the Advocate. Michelle offered to start drafting a letter for review at the upcoming meeting. It was noted that this could be reused and circulated to Town Meeting members.

There was some discussion whether the proposed changes to the trust bylaw should be adopted that evening, specifically regarding the composition of the trust board relative to public housing residents, but the decision was made to discuss all changes at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.